

Israeli voters moving to right

Tel Aviv (R) — Israelis have shifted towards ultra-nationalist parties seeking expulsion of Palestinians and more Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, according to a poll published Tuesday. Pollster Hanoch Smith said the survey published in *Davar* newspaper indicated the views of Israeli voters. Both the dovish opposition Labour Party and the ruling Likud Party of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had lost support to small right-wing parties since the last national election in 1988. Ultra-nationalist parties allied with Likud in a coalition since June had gained eight per cent since 1988, the poll showed. A coalition of Labour and Likud collapsed in March when Shamir refused to enter peace talks with Palestinians. In June, Likud formed the most right-wing government in Israel's history with religious and ultra-nationalist parties. The poll of 1,200 voters, conducted in November, showed 69 per cent of new voters — a category inflated by Soviet immigration of up to 30,000 a month — support Likud or its right-wing allies.



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Rocard: Hope for Gulf peace not lost

BREST, France (R) — The world should not give up hope of a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, French Prime Minister Michel Rocard said Tuesday. "I think hope of seeing Iraq realize it cannot violate international law with impunity is far from being lost," he told a news conference at the Atlantic naval port of Brest. Rocard was seeing off the helicopter carrier *Jeame d'Arc* on its annual round-the-world training cruise. "Before a negotiation ends in success, position harden and there are moments of serious tension," Rocard said referring to wrangling between Washington and Baghdad over dates for meetings to avoid war.

Iraq protests to U.S. for stopping Soviet ship

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Tuesday it had protested strongly to the United States over what it called "acts of piracy" against a Soviet ship in Jordan. A foreign ministry spokesman said the U.S. navy had stopped a Soviet ship, identified as Sovetskij, from unloading the personal belongings of Iraqis at Aqaba. He said the Americans had stopped the ship even though the crew told them the cargo consisted only of the personal belongings of Iraqis training in the Soviet Union. The spokesman, quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency, gave no date for the incident. It was unclear why Baghdad, target of an international blockade for months, was protesting at this stage. He said the Iraqi government "reserves its full right to defend its legitimate interests and to demand the rights of Iraq and its people, harmed by the acts of piracy of the U.S. forces."

Iran plans gas pipeline to Europe

NICOSIA (R) — Iran is holding talks with several countries about laying a gas export pipeline to France via Turkey. Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqaizadeh said Tuesday. He told reporters in Tehran that the pipeline would connect southern Iranian gas fields to the Turkish border via Qazvin in central Iran, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported. The report did not say which other countries lay on the proposed route or with whom Iran was discussing the project. Aqaizadeh said each country would undertake to build the section of the pipeline crossing its territory.

Anglican church urges prayers

LONDON (AP) — The next archbishop of Canterbury and other leading Anglican churchmen called on Christians Tuesday to pray for peace in the Middle East. "If war happens, there will be fearful loss of life and the scale of the escalation is unpredictable," said Bishop of Bath and Wells George Carey in a letter to the Independent newspaper bearing 16 other signatures, including 13 bishops. Although Christians divided on how to respond to the crisis, the churches should not keep silent, the letter said. "... We call on those who celebrate Christmas, and particularly those who attend church on Christmas eve, to pray for peace in the Middle East, possibly observing two minutes' silence at midnight," said the letter.

Assad meets U.S. legislator

DAMASCUS (R) — U.S. Congressman Wayne Owens and Ambassador Edward Djerejian discussed the Gulf crisis Tuesday with President Hafez Al Assad, officials and diplomats said. Owens, a member of the House of Representatives Foreign Relations Committee, is in Damascus for the second time in a week. Last Tuesday he met Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharraa and Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam. Syria became an unlikely ally of the United States when it backed international resolutions condemning Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq: Talks useless if U.S. wants only to stress U.N. resolutions

EC insists meeting with Aziz only after his Washington talks with Bush

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein said Tuesday that talks with Washington may not be worth having, while European leaders refused to discuss the Gulf crisis with Iraq unless it first met with the United States.

Saddam, speaking to a Turkish journalist, said it would be useless to hold direct talks with the United States if Washington only reiterates the U.N. Security Council resolutions on the Gulf crisis.

"We have already read them (the resolutions), we know them and we rejected them," Saddam said. The interview is to be broadcast on Turkish television later this week. Excerpts were released Tuesday.

U.S. President George Bush last month proposed direct U.S.-Iraqi talks. But Bush has stressed that the talks would be nothing more than an opportunity to make the U.S. position clear.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz had been due in Washington on Monday to meet with Bush. But the visit was put off after Saddam rejected U.S. proposals for a date for him to meet with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

The European Community (EC) had planned to meet with Aziz after he spoke with Bush.

But with the U.S.-Iraqi talks in doubt, the EC was hesitant to go ahead with its diplomatic initiative.

The 12 EC foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels, Belgium, decided Tuesday afternoon not to meet with Aziz unless he travels first to Washington.

"I think at midnight (on Jan. 15), if he's not totally out of Kuwait, the U.N. sanctions must be fulfilled," Bush told reporters in Washington Monday. But the president would not elaborate on what he would do if Iraq fails to meet the deadline.

(Continued on page 5)

16 wounded in occupied lands; U.N. vote delayed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot and wounded 16 Palestinians in the occupied territories Tuesday during a strike to protest Israeli plans to expel four Palestinians, residents said.

Witnesses quoted by Reuters said one was a 60-year-old employee of the Nablus municipality whose car was stopped at a roadblock. Soldiers fired on the car after signalling it to proceed, they said.

An army spokesman said the man had refused to stop at the roadblock.

Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip battled Israeli soldiers with stones after the army lifted curfews from three Gaza Strip refugee camps. The curfews were imposed Friday after three Israeli factory workers were stabbed to death in Tel Aviv.

Hospitals in Gaza said 10 Palestinians were shot and wounded in the Nuseirat refugee camp and five others in Khan Younis and Jabalya camps.

Israel Radio said the army shot and wounded a masked Palestinian carrying a pistol in

Nuseirat. The army said it was checking the reports.

Police are still searching for two brothers from the Gaza Strip suspected of carrying out Friday's attack. The Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement took responsibility.

Palestinians have escalated attacks on Israelis inside Israel in revenge for the Oct. 8 massacre of over 20 Palestinians during a protest in Jerusalem.

Shops in the occupied territories stayed closed on Tuesday for a general strike called by Hamas to protest at Israeli orders on Saturday to expel four Hamas members and at the arrests of dozens of Hamas activists.

In Jerusalem, Palestinians stoned an Israeli bus and wounded one passenger, police said.

In the walled Old City of Jerusalem, Palestinians stoned former New York Mayor Ed Koch as he toured the area (See page 2). Lawyers fighting the expulsion orders said they expected further mass banishment of Palestinians.

OIC Secretary-General Hamid Al Gabid said in a statement Israel was punishing Palestinians with "acts of repression, terrorism and large scale detentions."

He said the permanent Security Council members should exert pressure on Israel to prevent

(Continued on page 5)

Iraq says Soviets free to leave

BAGHDAD (R)

— Iraq told a senior Soviet envoy Tuesday that all Soviet technicians were free to leave the country even if their contracts had not run out.

Baghdad Radio quoted Hussein Kamel Hassan, the minister of industry and military industrialization who is also acting oil minister, as telling the Soviet foreign trade minister's first undersecretary, Vladimir Mordvinov.

"Iraq allows Soviet experts working in the country to leave as they wish irrespective of the date of termination of their contracts."

Mordvinov was quoted by the radio as saying: "The departure of some Soviet experts for a temporary period will not affect the level of relations between the two countries."

Soviet embassy officials said Monday that Mordvinov was negotiating the departure of the advisers.

Soviet special envoy Yevgeny Primakov told TASS news agency earlier Tuesday that "technical" problems were responsible for delays in repatriating Soviet experts from Iraq.

He said about 1,000 Soviet specialists had chosen to remain in Iraq to complete their contracts. Before the Invasion of Kuwait, 9,000 Soviet nationals worked in Iraq.

Iraq announced on Dec. 4 that all Soviet nationals could leave "provided the Soviet government alone bears the responsibility for the effects of breaches of contracts."

Benjedid returns home, plans to visit S. Arabia

ALGERIA (Agencies)

— Algerian President Chadli Benjedid, back from a week-long Middle East tour, will continue Gulf peace efforts with a visit to Saudi Arabia, the Algerian news agency APS said.

Benjedid visited nine countries but not Saudi Arabia, whose hosting of hundreds of thousands of U.S. and allied troops on the border with Kuwait makes it key to any Gulf settlement.

"Algeria intends to pursue its action in a continuous fashion to preserve the chances of peace and to guarantee, without offending anyone, the return to international legality," APS said Monday night.

"These efforts assume other consultations with concerned parties and in the framework Benjedid is expected to make other trips, notably to Saudi Arabia, shortly," it added.

Diplomatic and official sources had said before Benjedid left he would visit Saudi Arabia but the kingdom, appearing cool to the peace mission, said last week no date had been set.

The trip, including talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the leaders of Jordan, Iran, Oman, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, appeared to have achieved no breakthrough.

But APS said Algeria, a seasoned mediator in Middle East conflicts, would continue to seek an Arab contribution to a peace settlement to spare the region a catastrophic war.

"The Arab contribution to a settlement of the crisis remains

inevitable and possible, even if things escaped from the hands of the Arabs at the beginning of the conflict," APS quoted Foreign Minister Sid Ahmad Ghazali as saying.

Benjedid intends to invest the credibility, confidence and sincerity of Algeria to prevent catastrophe and destruction of the Arab World's potential," APS added.

Benjedid said in Tunis that war would be a disaster for the Middle East and the world as a whole.

His trip was the latest of many Arab initiatives on the Gulf crisis.

Benjedid had a second round of talks on Tuesday morning with Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali. The official news agency TAP said they discussed bilateral relations, the Arab Maghreb Union and Benjedid's Middle East tour.

Benjedid said the journey had given him a better understanding of the problem rather than results.

"I wanted to come to Tunis to explain my impressions, if that's the right expression, I won't say the results, which I reached on this long trip," he told reporters at Tunis airport.

One can now say one has an idea, even if incomplete, about the complicated issue which is the Gulf issue," he added.

Benjedid repeated his conclusion that the Arabs could contribute to a solution but the Gulf crisis had become international with the involvement of the United Nations.



KING VISITS ARMY UNIT: His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday paid a visit to the Fourth Mechanised Division where he was received by the division's commander and senior



officers. The King visited one of the formations of the division and was briefed by its commander on progress of military training activities.

U.N. moves to address Palestinian problem will help Gulf peace efforts — Crown Prince

AMMAN (J.T.)

— His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has said that ignoring the occupation of Palestine for the last 23 years had inflicted a feeling of bitterness among the Arab peoples.

In an interview with CBS Television, the Crown Prince also reiterated Jordan's principled position on the Gulf crisis:

"Jordan's position is the hope that peace can break out in the next few days rather than war," he said. "We have seen mass demonstration in the occupied territories over the last three

years — the intifada. And that has (affected) people in this country to the point where the occupation, the annexation of Kuwait was criticised in the early days. But, of course, the massive international response, the insistence on resolving the problem and the ignoring of the 23-year-old issue called Israeli occupation of Palestine had led to a great deal of bitterness.

"If there is a Security Council resolution tomorrow with a preamble to refer to the international conference and that a resolution that talks about protect-

ing Palestinians, this might help temper the general mood."

"We are apologists for peace in this country," the Crown Prince said. "We are not apologists for Iraq or the U.S. or for anyone else. We are trying to play the middle-of-the-path role which, as you know, in politics is a very difficult task."

Asked where there was a possibility that Iraq might withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15 or make a partial withdrawal, the Crown Prince said:

"As (U.S.) Secretary (of State James) Baker suggested, partial

(Continued on page 5)

Deputies debate budget; suggestions vary

By Abdullah Hasnat Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN

— Although the 1991 budget bill proposed by the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran seems to be heading for approval, deputies used the occasion of debating it yesterday to offer a variety of recipes to remedy the country's political, economic and social problems.

Before closing the session for a secret briefing by the prime minister on the Gulf crisis and Jordan's position on it, the House heard the report of its Financial Committee that approved the draft budget with

only a JD 10 million reduction in the total figure of expenditure and some reservations made by four deputies.

During the debate that started Tuesday and will be resumed this morning, one deputy, Hussein Mujjali, a pan-Arab nationalist from Jerash, called on the prime minister to resign so that a new government could be formed. The new government, Mujjali said, should adopt alternative policies that would "protect Jordan's right of existence" and address the country's economic problems.

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He said the budget was still in the red and was heavily dependent on external borrowing to

cover deficit.

He said that although the draft budget talks about a 1990-1996 comprehensive economic plan, that plan "was worked out behind closed doors, without involving the political and economic groups that represent the interests of all social strata."

The 22-strong Muslim Brotherhood bloc in the House called for a comprehensive economic plan based on Islamic principles. The Brotherhood demanded the government review all financial legislation "in order to weed out any laws that contradict the Islamic Sharia."

(Continued on page 5)

Iran voices concern over U.S. plans

NICOSIA (Agencies)

— Iranian leader Yasser Arafat said Tuesday the United Nations and not the United States should lead peace talks in the Gulf crisis.

"Peace talks are welcome but why should it be Bush and Baker (the American president and secretary of state)? Why not let the (U.N.) secretary-general do it?" he told a news conference during a four-hour visit before flying on to Tanzania.

Baghdad and Washington, which has led a massive international military build-up in the Gulf following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August, are deadlocked on when to organise a visit to Baghdad by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

"It is an international issue and not American business," Arafat said after talks with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, adding that the world should pursue peace "because

Iran stepped up diplomatic efforts this month to help avert war ahead of the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait or face force.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati was due to arrive in Sweden Tuesday after Gulf crisis talks in Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

"The trips being made by Iran's foreign minister nowadays are aimed at preventing the outbreak of a war," IRNA quoted Rasanjani as saying.

Despite condemning Iraq's actions in Kuwait, Tehran has been improving ties with Baghdad since Iraq and Iran agreed to make peace in mid-August.

Rasanjani said Iran had documents proving some Iranian prisoners of war were still alive in Iraq

Iraqis urged to conserve fuel oil

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Oil Ministry urged Iraqis Wednesday to stockpile oil and petroleum products for the winter to avoid shortages if war erupts in the Gulf.

The announcement, published by the government's Al Jourhuriya daily, said the ministry will provide the market with fuel oil, kerosene, cooking gas, gasoline and diesel so that purchases can be made.

"We hope that all citizens will buy their needs so they may overcome any shortages that might result from an aggression on our oil installations," it said.

Iraq was producing around 3.1 million barrels of oil a day, of which 100,000 barrels a day were needed for domestic consumption, before its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq has shut down an estimated 75 per cent of its oilfields

Allies aim to topple Iraqi air power

BAHRAIN (R) — If a Gulf war breaks out, allied planes aim to win control of the skies within hours by launching a devastating strike against Iraqi air power, a British air force commander said.

Group Captain David Henderson, commander of two squadrons of royal air force Tornado and Jaguar ground attack bombers in Bahrain, said his aircraft were ready to go to war.

His pilots were flying training missions round the clock and there would be no let-up in their high state of readiness over the coming holiday.

"It will be business as usual throughout the Christmas period," Henderson told reporters.

"The capabilities that we have against the Iraqis mean we could very quickly obtain air superiority," he said.

"I think we will use all the air assets we have got out here... to be able to mount a very careful

Saudi Arabia halts jet fuel exports to boost military stocks

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has stopped all jet fuel and diesel oil exports to boost military stocks before the United Nations Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait, Gulf-based oil traders said.

"It seems the (Saudi) government has instructed the refineries to stop all gas oil and kerosene exports," an oil trader in the Gulf said.

Almost 2,000 warplanes, the cutting edge of the multinational forces ranged against Iraq, need kerosene, the basis of jet fuel. Turbine-powered warships and some U.S. tanks also consume jet fuel.

Diesel oil powers most tanks, troop carriers, missile launchers and other transport vehicles.

Riyadh has undertaken to supply the fuel needs of the U.S.-led multinational forces massed in the kingdom.

"It seems Saudi Arabia wants to have full (fuel) tanks on Jan. 15," one oil trader said.

Oil industry sources also said three of the kingdom's major refineries, Ras Tanura, Jubail and Riyadh, lay within range of Iraqi missiles. This was another reason for a rapid buildup of dispersed stocks ahead of the U.N. deadline.

Oil traders in Singapore said Tuesday that Mobil, which operates a joint venture export refinery

coordinated attack to respond to anything they throw at us," he said.

Henderson asserted initial air superiority could be won "within hours," although other air force sources said it could take "days rather than weeks" to establish control in the skies.

Henderson said overall victory could not be achieved without ground forces.

Iraq has around 500,000 troops in or near Kuwait and since the August 2 invasion they have been digging in behind deep anti-tank ditches and high sand walls.

British air force officers are at pains to stress that while they do not want war, they will strike hard if hostilities start.

Squadron leader Chris Allam, who flies Jaguars, said: "I think you always have doubts, you wouldn't be human if you didn't have doubts. But we have got enough to do the job."

With Saudi Arabia at Yanbu on the Red Sea coast, had declared force majeure on kerosene and gas oil exports.

Force majeure exempts parties to a contract from their obligations because of events outside their control.

Saudi Arabia had already stopped all products exports from its Ras Tanura refinery, the world's biggest, after a fire on Nov. 30 forced a shutdown of the whole plant, until the first week of January.

Jet fuel and diesel oil exports from Jubail refinery on the Gulf, a joint venture with Shell, had also been halted since the first week of December.

Oil industry sources in the Gulf said the closure of Ras Tanura refinery until the first week to January has forced the kingdom to divert all available fuel sources to supply the multinational forces.

The sources said they believed the closure of Ras Tanura refinery would not affect the fighting capabilities of the U.S.-led multinational forces due to already high levels of stocks and the existence of other sources in and outside the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia has seven refineries altogether with a total capacity of around 1.7 million b/d, including Ras Tanura.

Out of the six remaining oper-

ational refineries, three are 50/50 joint venture export refineries. They are at Jubail on the Gulf (250,000 b/d), and Yanbu (250,000 b/d) and Rabigh (325,000 b/d) on the Red Sea, with Shell, Mobil and the Greek company Petrolia respectively.

The other three Saudi refineries are located at Jeddah (91,000 b/d), Riyadh (134,000 b/d) and Yanbu (170,000 b/d) and mainly serve the domestic market.

Oil industry sources said Saudi Arabia, by running its remaining six refineries at almost full capacity, could process around 1.2 million barrels of crude.

Apart from the refineries in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain's 250,000 b/d refinery, linked to the Arabian Peninsula by a 30-kilometre causeway, had been supplying the U.S. navy and air force in the Gulf with jet fuel even before Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

Three other refineries are operating on the Gulf coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Qatar has a 60,000 b/d plant, and Abu Dhabi an 80,000 b/d domestic refinery at Umm Al Nar and a 120,000 b/d export refinery at Ruwais.

Outside the Gulf, Oman has a 70,000 b/d plant and Yemen, a sympathiser of Iraq, a 170,000 b/d refinery at Aden.

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French Communists oppose Gulf role

PARIS (AP) — Secretary-General Georges Marchais opened the French Communist Party's national congress Tuesday with sharp criticism of France's participation in the Gulf crisis.

"This was not our war," Marchais said of a possible conflict in the Gulf.

Marchais, who like his party is 70 years old, also pledged to press ahead with a crusade against capitalism in France, even as he admitted that international communism is in deep trouble.

He ruled out any resumption of cooperation with the governing socialists, saying President Francois Mitterrand has forsaken the left and implemented "the policies sought by big money, the policies of right."

Marchais' nearly four-hour speech to more than 1,700 delegates opened the party's five-day congress, being held at a time when the organisation has its lowest level of support in decades. It remains, however, one of the west's largest communist parties.

The organisation claims 600,000 members, although even party members say the figure is inflated. Its support in recent national elections has dropped below 10 per cent.

Communists hold 26 of 577 seats in the National Assembly. In 1976, they held 182 seats, the most of any party in 1981 and 35 in 1986.

The party also controls 1,097 municipal councils, including dozens of working-class suburbs around major cities, but only one community — Le Havre — has more than 100,000 people.

The party congress, held every three years, is the highest-level forum for choosing leadership and setting policy. This one is its first since the fall of communist governments in Eastern Europe.

Marchais criticised the Soviet Union's decision to authorise use of force against Iraq in the Gulf crisis, saying this move "deeply disappointed the people of France."

He has previously criticised France's deployment of about 13,000 troops, 11 ships, and three squadrons of aircraft as part of the multinational force arrayed against Iraq in the Gulf.

Officials in Washington said Monday that Mengistu's government reached agreement last month with U.S. and Israeli diplomats to allow about 1,000 Jews to leave each month.

Immigration officials here said they expect a faster rate of immigration and predicted all 20,000 Jews trying to leave Ethiopia could arrive in Israel before the end of 1991.

Ethiopian Jews, who trace their lineage to Biblical times,

Expected wave of Falashas meets Israeli resistance

By Gwen Ackerman
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — Israeli towns, already burdened with absorbing thousands of Soviet immigrants, are reluctant to accept the 20,000 Ethiopian Jews expected to arrive in the next year, officials say.

Shimon Shetreet, treasurer of the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency that helps handle immigration to Israel, told Israel Radio Tuesday that resistance was centred in so-called development towns created in outlying areas.

"Most of those development towns who the agency was in contact with told us they were opposed to absorbing immigrants from Ethiopia... fearing the absorption of a large number will add to the socioeconomic problems they already have," said Shetreet.

Gad Ben Ari, spokesman for the agency, referred to "pockets of resistance" to the Ethiopian immigrants, citing economic and social burdens caused by settling the African Jews, known as Falashas, who come mostly from peasant backgrounds.

He added in a telephone interview: "This is very grave in our eyes. Simha Dimitz, director of the agency, calls the resistance totally unjustified and unacceptable."

The mayors of Dimona and Shlomo were quoted in the daily Hadashot as citing lack of apartments as reason for not wanting the Ethiopians.

However, Jewish Agency officials and news reports blamed the reluctance to house the black Jews by Israeli towns on the burden of absorbing Soviets arriving at the rate of more than 1,000 daily.

They also cited complaints that the Ethiopians require more care since most are unskilled and uneducated. More than half of the Ethiopians who arrived through Operation Moses remained in absorption centres.

The mayors of Dimona and Shlomo were quoted in the daily Hadashot as citing lack of apartments as reason for not wanting the Ethiopians.

Both said that all vacant apartments have been filled by the new Soviet arrivals. Some 155,000 Soviet Jews have arrived in Israel in the past year and officials expect a million by the end of 1992.

However, Hadashot also reported that the town of Maalot said last year it could not accept Ethiopians because it could not afford to refurbish apartments for them. Now, the newspaper said, 500 Soviets are living in the same buildings.

Despite Ethiopian complaints of being pushed aside by the more easily absorbed Soviet immigrants, Ben Ari said he was confident the Ethiopians would benefit from the simultaneous influx.

"The Ethiopian Jews will be part of the momentum and the process will be much easier this time," he said.

Ethiopian Jews, who trace their lineage to Biblical times,

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

French pacifists stop Gulf-bound ferry

DUNKIRK, France (R) — Pacifists and trade unionists in the French port of Dunkirk have stopped a government-chartered ferry carrying equipment for French forces in the Gulf, officials said Wednesday. They said seamen and dockers prevented the ferry from leaving Tuesday night and some 20 pacifists opposed to France's involvement in the Gulf boarded the ship. France has 6,200 troops in Saudi Arabia and is sending 3,300 reinforcements.

Dutch wants option to refuse Gulf duty

THE HAGUE (R) — A Dutch conscripts' union has asked parliament to rule that soldiers doing their military service be allowed to refuse any call for duty in the Gulf. The Netherlands is weighing whether to send ground forces or otherwise increase its contribution to the Western efforts to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait.

The Union for Conscript Soldiers, which fights to improve conditions for conscripts, said that if the government decided to send ground troops, conscripts should be asked to go only on a voluntary basis. "Conscripts must in all cases decide themselves whether or not they will take part in a force in the Gulf," the petition said. A Defence Ministry spokesman declined to comment on the petition, saying that no decision on whether to send Dutch ground troops had yet been made. But he noted that the 700 Dutch marines on two frigates so far sent by the Netherlands to the Gulf had all freely consented to their task.

Danish warship rescues Iranians

COPENHAGEN (AP) — A Danish warship Wednesday rescued six Iranian seamen off a freighter that sank after a collision with another vessel in the Gulf, Denmark's public radio reported. The sailors were being treated for exposure in the sick-bay of the Danish corvette Officer Fischer after spending six hours in the sea, the radio said. They were to be taken to Dubai later Wednesday. A seventh crewman from the Iranian freighter was still missing, the radio said. A U.S. destroyer and a Norwegian supply ship joined the search. The freighter was en route from Dubai to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas around midnight local time when it was rammed and sunk by a larger vessel, said the radio. The other ship sailed on and disappeared in the dark. The incident occurred near the Hormuz Strait at the mouth of the Gulf. The Iranian vessel was not identified in the report.

Judge revokes bail for Nosair

NEW YORK (AP) — A judge, disclosing that he had been threatened, revoked Al Sayid Nosair's \$300,000 bail Tuesday and ordered the suspect in the killing of Rabbi Meir Kahane remanded to jail. State Supreme Court Justice Alvin Schlesinger cited several factors as evidence that there was a strong likelihood that Nosair, 35, a native of Egypt, would flee. Among them was a passport Nosair held in a different name. The judge also noted that officials had found some cyanide in Nosair's workplace locker at a Manhattan address where he worked as a city heating maintenance man. Schlesinger said the cyanide could be used to poison someone or commit suicide. The judge said he believed prosecutors had a strong case against Nosair, who is accused of gunning down the Jewish leader at a Manhattan hotel on Nov. 5. Schlesinger noted a bullet-ridden piece of plasterboard that prosecutors removed from Nosair's Cliffside Park, New Jersey, home. During the bail hearing, the judge also disclosed that he received numerous death threats and attempts to influence him via telephone messages and mail. His admission prompted defence attorney Michael Warren to ask that Schlesinger remove himself from the case, which the judge promptly denied saying the threats and attempts to pressure him would not affect his handling of the case. The next hearing in the case was set for March 4.

Egypt's Azhar slams Israel

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's Al Azhar, the world's oldest seat of Islamic learning, attacked Israel Wednesday for ordering four Palestinians out of the occupied territories and failing to protect Muslim holy places. "Al Azhar condemns Israeli threats to continue aggression on holy places in Jerusalem and the expulsion of Arabs from their homes," said a statement carried by the Middle East News Agency. Israel ordered the expulsion of four Palestinians, after the stabbing to death on Friday of three Israelis in Tel Aviv. The statement also denounced Israel for failing "to perform its duties towards the protection of holy places of all religions." It held Israel responsible for actions by its nationals at the holy sites. Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque is Islam's third holiest place. The statement called on Palestinians "to hold on to their land and defend their holy places even with their own bodies." It urged Muslim nations and international organisations to take action "to protect unarmed Arabs and enable them to exercise their human rights."

New Zealanders advised to leave Gulf

WELLINGTON (R) — Dependents of New Zealanders living in some parts of the Gulf should leave the area well before the January 15 deadline for Iraqi troops to quit Kuwait. Foreign Affairs Minister Don McKinnon said on Wednesday. McKinnon said in a statement that he was offering common sense advice because of the possibility of war breaking out in the region after the deadline, set by the United Nations Security Council. The advice to quit applies to dependents in Bahrain, Qatar and the Eastern Province and southern parts of Saudi Arabia. Last month, the new National Party government reversed the policy of its Labour predecessor by announcing that New Zealand would join the multinational force in the Gulf. It is due to send two Hercules transport aircraft shortly.

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Seminar seeks to develop programmes for child safety

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A national seminar on children's safety in the home, attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, opened Tuesday at the Plaza Hotel. The two-day seminar seeks to develop a comprehensive national programme, incorporating and coordinating the efforts of all institutions and organisations engaged in the child safety in the home campaign.

The seminar is organised by Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) health communications project. This project, launched in 1986 in cooperation with United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is designed to help developing countries increase the impact of child survival programme through the systematic use of improved communication. It also provides assistance in social marketing, mass media planning, advertising and promotion, behavioural studies, ethnographic research and programme evaluation.

"This seminar aims at bringing the problem of child safety in the home to the attention of researchers, policy- and decision-makers as well as parents, families, and others who deal with children," Sima Bahous, director of the health communications projects at NHF said.

Bahous underlined ways in which children's injuries can be prevented by stressing the need to "take the danger away from the child rather than tell the child to stay away from danger."

"Parents are aware of the problem only when it occurs; what we have to do is raise the

"Cartoons are the most vi-

lent shows on television," Rifai said, adding that on one occasion he interviewed 120 children and asked them to name their favourite cartoon show with the majority saying it was "Tom and Jerry." "It is a very violent show," Rifai said.

Asked what can be done to correct this kind of negative effect on children, Rifai said: "On the decision-making level, television should adopt a policy that will take out violent programme." As for parents, Rifai said, they can participate in curbing such a negative effect on their children. "Parents should watch television with their children and express their disapproval of certain behaviour they see. That will affect the child," he said.

Another participant was Mohammad Ayayesh, a faculty member of the Communications and Journalism Department at Yarmouk University, who based his research on the role of mass media in promoting the safety of children in the home. "The mass media can play a role in two ways. First through regular programmes and second through a communication campaign approach that is more concentrated," he said, adding that "if a long-term objective is required for immediate results the second one will suffice."

The seminar, organised by NHF and USAID, included representatives from ministries of information, health, education, social development, trade and industry in addition to representatives from Jordanian universities and different societies and associations.

"Children, especially at an early age, are affected by what they see on television, especially violence, anti-social and destructive behaviour and they tend to imitate this sort of behaviour," Rifai said. He added that although not a lot of research on this subject has been done in Jordan "in the United States hundreds of reports prove that if children watch violence they imitate it."

"Cartoons are the most vi-

Lives of 12m children saved, UNICEF report says

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Wednesday launches the 1991 State of the World's Children Report which outlines a general review of the world's children in terms of health, education, survival, protection and development, and forecasts prospects for a better life for children in the decade ahead.

The report this year announces that the lives of over 12 million children have been saved by the decade-long effort to immunise 80 per cent of the developing world's children.

According to Mehr Khan, director of UNICEF's division of information in New York, this extraordinary achievement, in which the media has played a vital part in almost every country, has also prevented over 1.5 million cases of polio.

The year's report is about goals set by the World Summit for Children, attended by more than 70 heads of state or government in New York, and how they can be achieved by the year 2000, Khan said in a message launching the 1991 report.

UNICEF Regional Director Richard Reid addresses a press conference Wednesday to release the report.

The survey, he said, reveals very disturbing facts about the actual situation concerning the condition of children many with parents who had lost their means of income.

Reid, who urged the media to focus attention on the plight of children, said the UNICEF planned to prepare documentary films, to be shown in Western Nations, to draw attention to the plight of children in this part of the world.

countries, set out the minimum standard for child protection, survival and development.

In its review of the condition of children worldwide, the report focuses on the children of the poor and children living under difficult circumstances in the Third World. It also reviews the opportunities available for saving the lives of millions of children who die or are disabled every year as a result of a handful of easily preventable diseases. The report outlines the goals for the 1990s and proposes actions ensuring that such goals are met before the turn of the century.

Reid told a press lunch Monday that UNICEF would soon publish the findings of a survey conducted in Jordan, organised in cooperation with the Health Ministry, on the effects of the Gulf crisis on children in the Kingdom in terms of health, nutrition and future prospects.

He said the survey, which covered 500 households in Jordanian towns and refugee camps in the urban, rural and bedouin regions, was conducted by UNICEF teams of workers recently.

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Jordan marks Arab Police Day

AMMAN (Petra) — Director of Public Security Department Major General Fadel Ali Feid

Tuesday said the public security personnel are proud of His Majesty King Hussein, who spared no effort in supporting the public security forces and enabling it to attain advanced stages, thus preparing it to be the "honest guard of Jordan's security and stability."

Addressing a group of journalists attending a major celebration held by the Public Security Department to mark the Arab Police Day, Feid said that the PSD personnel were looking forward to seeing King Hussein's efforts bridging the gap among the Arab ranks and bearing fruit.

"The policeman who performs his duties in the various fields deserves the highest appreciation from all of us," Feid said.

He voiced hope that policemen and citizens alike will continue to do their best to achieve stability and to safeguard order and law.

"Never before had the relation between the security men and citizens been based on closer cooperation, confidence and trust feelings than it is now,"

The Standing Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies had decided to send medicines worth 150,000 Swiss francs to Iraq.

In an earlier development Abu Qoura appealed to the United Nations Security Council and international humanitarian bodies to provide protection to the Palestinian people under Israeli rule.

Abu Qoura, who is also president of the International Standing Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, also said an Israeli decision to expel four Palestinian political activists was illegal.

He issued the appeal for protection to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movements, all international bodies and the U.N. Security Council.

"Protection of these civilians is needed after all international humanitarian bodies and the Security Council have failed to force Israel to accept the Fourth Geneva Convention," Abu Qoura said.

Addressing a press conference with Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura, president of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS), the Iraqi official said that Iraq did not possess a strategic supply of medicines; it used to import its drugs on annual basis and to receive shipments monthly.

Since Aug. 2, he said, Iraq has received only \$3 million worth of medicines when as a rule, the country used to purchase \$300 million worth of drugs annually.

He said that embargo on medicine contradicted the 1949 convention and its protocols which excludes medicines destined to civilians from any sanctions, on any country during peace or war.

According to Dr. Abdul Hamid, the current embargo imposed on Iraq led to a halt in programming that used to provide health protection in Iraq due to shortage of vaccines needed for immunisation programmes.

This, he said, has led to the spread of children's diseases while lack of sufficient milk for children has led to malnutrition leading to death in most cases.

Iraq concluded deals for the purchase of 164 shipments of

milk and medicine. The Iraqi government has paid in full for the shipments before Aug. 2, but these shipments are still frozen as countries from which they are coming refuse to send them to Iraq although U.N. Security Council resolution 666 excludes medicine from sanctions, according to Dr. Abdul Hamid.

He demanded that the world community re-examine the current embargo procedures and appealed to the countries delaying the dispatch of milk and food to speed up delivery to prevent more people from dying.

The head of the International Affairs Department at the Red Cross Society in the Netherlands, who was present at the press conference, said that his society had donated 16.5 tonnes of medicines to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the shipments would be channelled to Iraq through JNRCS. The Dutch official said he would hold talks with Dr. Abdul Hamid on coordinating humanitarian efforts for the Iraqi people.

JNRCS President Ahmad Abu Qoura criticised the societies which he accused of being "biased" regarding humanitarian services and assistance for the Iraqi people.

Abu Qoura said that Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are humanitarian groups which should be allowed to act freely and offer their services to mankind in a neutral manner.

Abu Qoura announced that

IPPNW leaves Amman for Baghdad on peace mission

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), currently on a visit to Jordan, leaves for Baghdad Wednesday on a peace mission during which they are expected to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Medical Association.

Meanwhile, the Department of Statistics announced Monday that it had conducted a survey of the services sector and its employees in Jordan as well as on the capital invested and the number of people employed in this sector.

According to a department statement, a total of 11,600 service centres are now operating in the country, mostly in the capital, employing altogether 47,022 Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers.

It said that the total capital invested in such sectors was estimated at JD 216 million.

He described the medical and

environmental consequences that would affect the entire region and the whole world if war broke out in the region. He informed the audience on the history of the IPPNW and on how doctors from the Soviet Union and the United States had built a new movement and formulated a new manner of thinking that were guiding world leaders at the height of the cold war.

This new manner of thinking must be widely promoted in the Middle East and in the West if we are to avert a catastrophic war that will have civilians and children as the majority of casualties should war break out," Lown said.

Lown is accompanied by the IPPNW Vice President in Europe Ulrich Gortstein, the IPPNW Secretary John Pastore, IPPNW leader and member of

the Congress of Peoples' Deputies in the Soviet Union Sergei Kolitsikov and William Manning, an attorney and executive director of IPPNW from Boston, U.S.

The delegation is being hosted by the Jordanian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (JPPNW) which is headed by Dr. Nabil Muammar.

Monday the delegation members were received by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem and by Deputy Regional Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Nigel Fisher.

In addition to conveying a peace message, the delegation is compiling information on the capacity of the medical establishments in the region to handle the anticipated high numbers of casualties and burn victims in the event of war.

Abu Qoura announced that

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Peace's the answer

MUCH HOPE has been pinned on the proposed U.S.-Iraqi talks at a time when Washington intended to use such talks just to deliver an ultimatum to Baghdad: Withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally or face war. Since the object of the dialogue, according to Washington, is simply to serve Baghdad with the U.N. Security Council Resolution 678, one wonders why the U.S. took it upon itself to act on behalf of the council without any specific mandate from it. In this context it would be more prudent to have other members of the council involved in such limited discussions which also include the non-permanent members if this is the sole purpose of them. Paris, Moscow, Sanaa, Bogota and other capitals represented in the council are equally involved in the process of serving the sentence on Iraq if that is all that is intended in the envisaged Washington-Baghdad contacts. The case would be of course different if U.S. President George Bush seeks to engage Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in genuine and profound dialogue. There is no doubt that the ongoing difficulty associated with arranging meetings between the two sides stems primarily from the fact that Washington is knocking at Baghdad's door with threats and bellicose statements that aim to preempt the results of the projected talks. Had the White House abstained from uttering belligerent declarations on the eve of the Bush-Aziz talks and instead made conciliatory statements, the issue of determining the date for the visit of the U.S. secretary of state to Baghdad would have never posed a problem in the first place. In the light of the complications that ensued, however, it is imperative that the other members of the council, notably the permanent ones, intervene immediately and offer their good offices with a view to arrive at an acceptable date for the potentially promising talks. No one wishes to lecture the council on how to approach its dialogue with Iraq but it would be wise to caution against embarking on it with threats and warnings. Such approaches have gotten the world nowhere thus far and it is high time that the international community — especially the superpowers — adopted a more imaginative attitude towards Iraq. Short of war, which one gathers the entire human race would rather not resort to, the only alternative left to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait peacefully is to engage it into meaningful negotiations on the basis of the 12 resolutions and by acting and talking in a more conciliatory manner. It is perplexing that other permanent members of the Security Council are taking a back seat on the matter and have left the responsibility to Washington to get Iraq into a talking mood. There is no excuse for the other capitals to act as mere spectators when the stakes are so high and far-reaching. This is not time for low profile diplomacy and the rest of the countries with sufficient clout with Iraq and the other major players in the Gulf crisis are called upon to pitch in their efforts in order to save the region from disastrous consequences. The Jan. 15 deadline prescribed by the council is not so sacrosanct that it cannot be extended should there be signs that a peaceful way out is in the horizon. Once the process of peace gains a foothold, there will be opportunity for everyone to get satisfactory results from it. War will be in nobody's interest.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily Tuesday quoted a former American Defence Secretary Zbigniew Brzezinski as urging the U.S. administration to refrain from involving the United States in a devastating war which could only offer sc... to others. The paper said that one of these countries is Kuwait or rather the ousted emir and his family who are advocating war and urging the United States to help him to return to power. The paper said that Israel has a great interest in such a war in which it hopes that the Iraqi military power will be destroyed. There have been voices in the United States like that of Defence Secretary Dick Cheney who were calling for the destruction of Iraq's military power which Cheney said that posed a threat to Israel, the paper noted. Of course the Zionist lobby in the United States spares no moment and loses no chance in instigating the U.S. administration to beat the drums of war and not to accept the idea of settling the Gulf crisis by a peaceful means, the paper noted. It said that for its part, Britain also wants a war to see the old regime reinstated in view of the vast funds it has deposited in British banks and businesses. The paper said that Britain, Israel and the emir of Kuwait are not concerned in the least about what would happen to the Gulf region, its people, and its economy in the event of war breaking out. All they want to achieve, the paper said, is their own selfish interest. It called on the U.S. administration to opt for reason and for logic and not to go into war for which only the American people will pay dearly.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily bitterly criticizes Yaqoub Ziadin, the secretary general of the Jordanian Communist Party for his anti-Arab views published on Nov. 30 in the Al Khaleej newspaper, and says that these views provoke indignation, sadness and anger in the hearts of the Arab people. Jaled Al Fasek refers to a number of points in Ziadin's statements especially his condemnation of Iraq's takeover of Kuwait, thus choosing to stand against the general political trend in Jordan. In his statement Ziadin compares Iraq with Israel, alleging that the Iraqi troops looted Kuwaiti hospitals and schools, and that the take over of Kuwait was a good service for the Americans and their interests in the Gulf. Furthermore, says the writer, the head of the Communist Party refuses to link the Gulf crisis with the Palestine problem, thus supporting the views of the Americans, the Israelis and their allies in the region. Ziadin reveals that Arab Communists parties met in Damascus shortly after Iraq's takeover of Kuwait and denounced the move, as if he boasting of such an attitude on the part of the Communists, says the writer. What is more, he adds, Ziadin attacked Jordanian newspaper columnists who maintain a campaign against the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf, according to Faneek.

Former U.S. officials urge peaceful resolution in Gulf

By Berta Gomez

WASHINGTON — Richard Murphy, former assistant secretary of state for North Africa, Near East and South Asia affairs and ambassador to Syria and Saudi Arabia, said Dec. 17 that a war in the Middle East would inevitably result in "negative although unpredictable consequences" for American interests in the region.

Murphy made his assessment during a hearing before the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, which also heard testimony from Hermann Elts, former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and Samuel Lewis, former U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Noting that his own "strong preference" would be a peaceful resolution of the current crisis, Murphy acknowledged that if Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein "is determined never to pull his forces out of all of Kuwait, then the prospects for armed conflict... are indeed high."

Murphy said that while military action would be greeted with an "immediate sigh of relief" from Kuwait, from most members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and from Israel, the long-term consequences would be complicated.

He warned that the regional balance of power would shift. Iran "would ipso facto become more powerful regionally." Syria would be in danger of experiencing internal dissent, and any military participation on the part of Israel "could create substantial chaos in Jordan," Murphy said.

Another possible consequence would be a strengthening of anti-U.S. sentiments within the Arab World. "If we destroy the Iraqi military machine... (and) the Arab-Israeli problem continues to fester," the United States would be open to the "inevitable allegation that our war against Iraq was at the behest of Israel." The reactivation of the Arab-Israeli peace process is thus essential, Murphy said.

He told the panel that even if the crisis is resolved peacefully, a United Nations peacekeeping force "should definitely be considered as part of the package of arrangements to contain Iraq and prevent the peace."

Similarly, Hermann Elts said the idea of a long-term U.S. military presence in the region was unwise, and that any foreign "protection" forces could more easily be maintained under the umbrella of the United Nations or the

Arab League. Elts also cautioned against what he called "exaggerated expectations of post-crisis changes in the Arab World." He noted that there is "an endemic stain in much of the Middle East area" and that the regional and personality differences that have hampered real Arab cooperation will continue. Those differences, he said, "have been and remain endemic." At the

solved, it would be advisable to install some kind of "military containment structure," possibly in Kuwait. In his view, however, such a force ought to include the United States.

Lewis said the worst possible outcome of present crisis would be a long, protracted war. He stressed, however, that the "next worse" scenario would be a diplomatic solution that Saddam Hussein could de-

national order," he said. Nevertheless, Lewis said, he thinks there is a "good chance" of forcing Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait by maintaining the international embargo, and backing it up with a "credible threat" of military action. He said he would be in favour of waiting until autumn of 1991 to let the sanctions take effect. Lewis added that Congress "can enhance the possibility that Saddam Hussein gets the right message" by passing a resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq.

Committee Chairman Les Aspin, responding that lawmakers are overwhelmingly opposed to giving Bush "a blank check to use force," said that Congress would vote "only when the president comes up with specific plan."

Asked by Republican Bill Dickinson about the prospects for an internal overthrow of Saddam Hussein, Elts pointed out that although there are several known Iraqi dissident groups, "I'm not at all impressed that they have any following."

Similarly, Murphy said the "cult of personality" is so strong in Saddam Hussein's Iraq that no other potential leaders have had the chance to develop.

Murphy and Lewis agreed that Arab states should have assumed a greater role in the military deployment. "The coalition," said Lewis, "is important, but thin." (USIS).

Searching for peace is 'not that easy'

By Jonathan Wright
Reuter

TUNIS — The search for an "Arab solution" to the Gulf crisis, as favoured by Iraq and its sympathisers, has suffered a possibly mortal blow in the response to a peace mission by Algerian President Chadli Benjedid.

Chadli's visit to Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Oman, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt had raised hopes among Iraq's friends that Arab diplomacy might avert a military showdown between Iraq and the United States over the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have said the problem of Kuwait is wholly Arab and should be settled without intervention from U.S. and other Western forces sent to the Gulf since August.

But in Damascus on Sunday, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad said they recognised that the possibility of a wholly Arab solution had faded.

They said they wanted a "peaceful settlement through Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the Kuwaiti government."

The United States and its allies, through a series of U.N. resolutions, have set the same terms for a solution.

Algeria, with long experience of mediating in Arab disputes and widely seen as the Arab state most likely to pull off a diplomatic coup in the Gulf, had already played down Chadli's mission, apparently to prevent unrealistic expectations.

"At the moment, there is neither an initiative nor an Algerian plan (for the Gulf) and the sole Algerian objective is to strengthen... any peace process," the state news agency APS said on Saturday night.

'Chadli's mission, despite its modest objectives, is the boldest by an Arab leader since King Hussein of Jordan toured the Arab World in the early days of the crisis.'

quoting authorised sources.

Saudi Arabia, central to the conflict as the main launching pad for any U.S. attack on Iraq after a United Nations deadline for withdrawal from Kuwait by Jan. 15, says no date has been set for any visit by Chadli to the kingdom.

Arab diplomats said that unless Saudi Arabia agreed to receive him it was hard to see how he could set in motion the Arab-Arab dialogue which Iraq's friends are hoping for.

A definitive Saudi rebuff

would also deeply upset the Algerians, who pride themselves on their neutrality and their easy access to all Arab leaders.

One reporter travelling with President Chadli said Saudi Arabia had lost its ability to decide independently in favour of dialogue with other Arabs because of the presence of U.S. troops and a Kuwaiti government-in-exile.

The Kuwaiti government believes an Arab solution would end up as a compromise reward-

ing Iraq for its invasion, either by ceding Kuwaiti territory or installing pro-Iraqi rulers.

Chadli's mission, despite its modest objectives, is the boldest by an Arab leader since His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan toured the Arab World in the early days of the crisis.

Since then both Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and King Hassan of Morocco have proposed Arab summits to avert war.

Their proposals have fallen on stony ground because the two

United States of Europe remains a distant dream

By Andres Wolberg-Stok
Reuter

ROMA — Twenty-three after its birth in Rome, the European Community has embarked on its most ambitious shake-up ever — but a United States of Europe remains only a distant vision.

"It is evident that this is just a first step," Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis said after the 12 community leaders opened months of negotiations on Saturday to broaden the EC treaty to a host of new areas.

Two Inter-governmental Conferences (IGCs) launched by the EC summit could produce some of the trappings of a federal structure by the end of the century.

If all agree, this could include a single currency, an independent central bank, the equivalent of a foreign ministry, an embryo defence role and European citizenship in the single market for goods, services and capital which is due to be in place by 1993.

This may fall far short of the federalists' dream of a United States of Europe as espoused by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, but it would be a long way from the community's shape at birth as a six-country trading bloc in 1957.

As shown at the summit, the 12 member states already act as one in many aspects of foreign policy.

They agreed to provide emergency aid for the Soviet Union, warned Iraq to withdraw

from Kuwait, lifted a joint ban on new investments in South Africa, pledged further assistance for Lebanon, criticised Israel's treatment of Palestinians, called for new links with Latin America and deployed stalemate in talks to shape world trade in the 21st century.

One of the aims of the IGC on so-called political union is to develop common foreign and security policy which, while letting member states take individual action in fields where they have traditional interests, would make the bloc itself speak with one voice.

One of the most debated points in the summit was whether foreign and security matters should be decided by unanimity, as is now the case, or by a majority, an Italian spokesman said.

The IGC guidelines set at the summit say broad directions should be drafted by consensus, but that specific policies should then be decided by a qualified majority, which weighs countries' votes according to their size.

Despite the objections of smaller members who fear political dominance by big neighbours, the decision-making core for foreign and security policy will be the European council made up of the EC leaders.

The defence role, summit guidelines say, could emerge gradually but should respect and even strengthen existing links in the 16-country U.S.-led Western military body, NATO.

Islamist strength in Algeria is undermined by division

By Philip Shabani
Reuter

ALGIERS — The creation of a moderate fundamentalist party in Algeria has deepened splits in the powerful Islamic movement as it gears up for general elections next year.

The Movement for Islamic Society, known by its Arabic initials Hama, is reshaping Algeria's political landscape months before the first multi-party parliamentary poll since independence in 1962.

Hama, taking the same acronym as the underground group involved in the revolt against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, is courting both liberals and disenchanted backers of the dominant Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) that won an upset victory in local elections last June.

Its 48-year-old leader, Sheikh Maftoud Nahmeh, drew more than 15,000 people to a rally on Dec. 6 when he announced the formation of Hama, an outgrowth of his Irshad Wal Islah (Orientation and Reform) Association, founded in 1988.



Abdeslam Madani, leader of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), is shown in a portrait. The caption notes that he reached the danger point, was pummeled with stones, and faced opposition from FIS supporters.

Only days before another young religious leader in the eastern city of Constantine, Sheikh Abdullah Djeballah, won legal status for a third major fundamentalist party, the Islamic Renaissance Movement.

Some analysts say the fundamentalist parties are bound to unite eventually and their multiplication will only help them win power by expanding their appeal and offering new fundamentalist options to those unhappy with the FIS.

But another scenario is alarming members of all three camps — the possibility that divisions may deepen, alienating voters and even leading to bloody conflict.

FIS President Abdeslam Madani has called Nahmeh's initiative a "stab in the back" and many FIS activists are convinced Nahmeh, given wide and largely favourable coverage in the state media, is part of a government plot to divide them.

"People may say that if the Islamists are now fighting among themselves what will they do when they reach power? But indications are we have

reached the danger point," said Mohamed Bouslimani, vice-president of the Irshad Association.

Nahmeh was pummeled with stones — a supreme Muslim insult — after a prayer meeting last week in the central city of Medea by FIS supporters who

see no standing against the expansion of the FIS which is wrong. But there have been calls for unity from many mem-

bers which we hope will moderate the (FIS) radicals," Bouslimani told Reuters.

Nahmeh's appeal for a more gradual approach to the construction of an Islamic state, his clear commitment to democratic change and bid to woo liberals now outside the FIS and pro-democracy parties that have mushroomed in the new democratic climate.

"We believe in moderation, in dialogue. That was the approach of the Prophet (Mohammed). There are democrats close to the Islamic doctrine. There are common denominators. In politics one should play with several cards, not just one."

The FIS won four million votes last June but it has been hurt by its failure to make headway in overcoming intractable local problems in the hundreds of towns and cities it now runs.

Bouslimani said some overzealous FIS mayors had made mistakes, rushing too fast to implement Islamic moral principles and setting the wrong priorities. But he said Nahmeh shared the FIS goal of bringing Algerian life and culture into line with Islamic values.

Crown Prince

(Continued from page 1)

confrontational course. "I don't think James Baker has any objection to the Iraqis talking to the Europeans but what are they going to talk about? I'd like to see those talks take place. And two things; yes, there is a readiness effectively to address that issue and if the Palestine issue can be addressed on its own merits then at least we can talk round that question of the inter-relation between the two issues."

In reply to a question how close the region was to war, the Crown Prince said:

"We are talking about the possibility of famine in many parts of the wider Middle East region. We are talking about economic and ecological disaster and although the international community has just concluded a conventional force reduction agreement we cannot talk about even that, let alone weapons of mass destruction as part of a process."

"U.N. resolutions do not talk about attacking Iraq. They talk about getting Iraq out of Kuwait. And that is what we would like to see. We'd like to see a process start. We have no room for optimism as things stand."

What role would Jordan play in the event of a war, he said:

"We were told by CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) Director (William) Webster and by General (Norman) Schwarzkopf (the commander of the U.S. force in Saudi Arabia) that the war would last anything up to six months, it would be a long and protracted bloody affair."

Jordan of course will be subjected demographically to a movement of more than a million refugees from the Gulf. God knows what is going to happen in the occupied territories, and whether in some stage Israel may be involved. Our role will be on the receiving end of a great deal of devastation both in human terms and indeed in weapon terms."

"Jordan will stand up for its sovereignty and defend itself."

Budget

(Continued from page 1)

They also called for the issuance of interest-free Islamic bonds, the provision of financial facilities for Islamic banks, the extension of more loans to farmers, the enactment of a zakat (alm) law and negotiations with Arab and Islamic financial institutions to urge them to invest in the country. Yousef Khasawneh, a deputy from Irbid, presented the Brotherhood's position to the House.

Citing the Financial Committee's report that put the Kingdom's servicing of debts at 38.9 per cent of total exports, the Brotherhood called for halting borrowing from abroad and the commencement of the building of an Islamic economy.

The government to include autonomous government institutions' budget in the main budget in accordance to the Constitution that stipulates that all public expenditure should be approved by Parliament.

The Brotherhood reviewed all fields of government activity and urged the government to enact reforms based on Islamic Sharia.

Going along with the Finance Committee's recommendations, the Brotherhood called for increasing the numerical strength

of the Armed Forces with "young people who believe in God and are ready to sacrifice and who long for martyrdom."

Reading a statement on behalf of the 13-member National Bloc, Deputy Suleiman Arar (Ma'an) noted that the 1991 budget comes at a time when Jordan and the whole region are entering into a crucial phase.

"In light of these circumstances, there is no way for us to depend on our own resources to get out of the crisis," he said.

The bloc stressed that Jordan, which has only limited resources, should not burden its budget with extra commitments.

The bloc also called for reforms in the fields of agriculture, public administration, industry and employment.

They called on the government to allow public shareholding companies to allocate 10 per cent of their profits to be invested in new projects.

They also called for army conscripts to be trained for six months only after which they should be employed in Jordanian institutions for reduced wages.

Deputy Fuad Khalafat, a Brotherhood deputy from Tafilah, earlier listed a number of alleged violations by Jordan Television and Radio. He said that spending at JTV and Jordan Radio was unconstitutional because it did not fall under the control of the Ministry of Finance and the Audit Bureau.

He cited a number of cases in which he said official media institutions violated the laws. These included the employment by the Jordan News Agency (Petra) of foreign nationals to edit its news bulletins.

Khalafat criticised the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington that he said costs JD 190,000 annually. The bureau, he said, is "run by a computer engineer," one-time Jordan Times columnist Dr. Marwan Al Muasher.

Iraqi stand

(Continued from page 1)

Baker said earlier Tuesday he had no problem with a European meeting with Aziz.

Baker, speaking at a news conference after a two-day meeting of foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Belgium, said: "We support... any diplomatic efforts that might result in a peaceful solution."

"The one thing we do discourage are discordant messages, mixed messages or mixed signals," he said.

The Bush-Aziz talks were scrubbed over differences on the timing of a subsequent trip to Baghdad by Baker.

Saddam has sought to hold the meeting Jan. 12, which Bush says is too close to the U.N. deadline for Iraq to quit Kuwait or face possible military action. Bush has said Iraq's position on the issue signals its lack of willingness to leave Kuwait as the coalition lined up against it instead.

Baker said he thinks Iraq might announce a partial pullout just before the Jan. 15 deadline contained in the U.N. resolution.

"We need to anticipate Saddam's possible moves, be prepared for a partial withdrawal and coordinate closely our responses," Baker said.

Some officials have said Iraq is willing to abandon part of Kuwait in return for the Kuwaiti section of a border-straddling oil

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Panama struggles for democracy and economic recovery

By Alina Guerrero
The Associated Press

PANAMA CITY, Panama — A year after the U.S. invasion, Panama is struggling to achieve democracy, a fair justice system and economic stability.

Demilitarisation is an important element in all three. Early in December, retired Col. Eduardo Herrera mounted what appeared to be a coup attempt with only a handful of officers, and the government asked American troops to help quell it.

Physical signs of the Dec. 20 invasion are gone but much remains to be done. There are indications of civilian impatience and of discontent in the security forces.

A recent poll by the newspaper La Prensa found that the number of people who thought the government was promoting true democracy had dwindled — only 29 per cent of those questioned thought it was, down from 11 per cent in August.

Forty-two per cent said the government had made no achievements, while 19 per cent named the government's main achievement as democratisation.

Some businessmen fear the constant squabbling among presidents in President Guillermo Endara's governing coalition will create an image of instability, scaring away foreign credit and capital.

With followers of ousted leader Manuel Antonio Noriega discredited, the only political opposition comes from within the coalition. Both vice presidents have an eye on the presidency in 1991.

Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderon said the coalition's main purpose was "to conduct the country from conditions that prevailed under the dictatorship to those which must prevail in a democracy."

They said the co-sponsors were still resisting a U.S. proposal the presidential statement explicitly deny any linkage between the Palestinian issue and the Gulf crisis.

Should no compromise be reached, diplomats said the co-sponsors might press for a vote on their draft, which Washington is likely to veto.

The United States is anxious not to use its veto for fear of alienating the Arab members of the alliance it has fashioned to confront Iraq.

Council President Abdullah Saleh Al Ashtal told reporters he was not certain which of several amended resolutions might be put to a vote Wednesday. He said he did not know whether various Western and non-aligned drafts could be reconciled.

Israel's latest expulsion order against Palestinians has fuelled tensions in the Security Council to enhance the safety of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Panama no longer sends young men to foreign military schools and provides only police, not military, training.

The government has pledged to "put right its financial administration and public finances, normalise relations with creditors and regain credit."

Economic growth since the invasion has been reported at 5.6 per cent, and Panama is trying to make its debt current by paying \$510 million in interest. Noriega skipped in 1987-1989.

Of this, \$130 million will come from U.S. aid and a like amount from Asian and European donations. Panama will pay \$130 million and the remaining \$150 million will come from a U.S. government loan.

Endara inherited an economic nightmare.

Unemployment was estimated at 35 per cent — it is now about 25 — and inflation had fallen 20 per cent in recent years because of corruption and a trade embargo.

Looting and damage from the invasion were estimated to total hundreds of millions of dollars, hardly any of it recovered because of war clauses in insurance policies.

"This is an unfinanced and indebted society," said former President Nicolas Ardito Barletta, an economist. He said economic revival depends "on our actions and on a stable political system and an economic policy consistent with our opportunities."

Homer's tale of revenge executions were no myth

By Stephen Weeks
Reuter

ELEFHERNA, Crete — One of the goriest scenes in Homer's Iliad, when Achilles slays 12 Trojans besides a funeral pyre, was a real practice among some ancient Greeks, according to new archaeological evidence.

A find late this year on Crete lends further weight to the belief that Homer, thought to be composing in the 8th-century before Christ, was chronicling real customs and rituals, not just spinning colourful yarns.

"For the first time we have found absolute archaeological evidence confirming the custom described by Homer in the 23rd book of the Iliad," said Nikos Stambolidis, associate professor of archaeology at Crete University.

Achilles, greatest of the Greek warriors in the Trojan War, swears over his slain boyhood friend Patroclus: "Before your funeral pyre I'll cut the throats of twelve glorious children of the Trojans, such is my murdering fury at your death."

He then builds a wooden pyre, covers it with offerings and slaughters his young Trojan captives in a revenge execution.

Homer's Iliad describes a great military campaign which united the Greek communities spread throughout the Aegean in the late bronze age — the siege of Troy around 1200 BC.

Thought by many to be the finest epic poem ever, it tells of a feud between Achilles and the Greek commander Agamemnon, who stole one of his handmaids.

Anger Achilles, the son of a goddess, refuses to fight and returns to battle only when Pat-

roclus is killed by the Trojan hero Hector.

Stambolidis, excavating among 10th to 7th century BC pyres in a cemetery in the foothills of Mount Ida in central Crete, found the skeleton of a man whose arms were bound behind him and his throat cut so violently that he was decapitated.

Evidence of human sacrifice has been found in the ancient civilisations of the east Mediterranean but this is the first discovery which matches Homer's ritual execution besides a pyre.

"We found a slaughtered man, about 30 to 40 years old, next to a funeral pyre," Stambolidis said during a recent walk among the terraced hillside vineyards and olive groves near the site.

"His head is missing, there is a broken knife next to the neck and a whet-stone to sharpen the executioner's blade," he said. Stambolidis believes a prominent citizen or noble from the ancient city of Eleftherna was cremated on the pyre and dates his find to 725-700 BC, meaning the cemetery killing happened around the time Homer composed the Iliad.

A compelling point for Stambolidis in the 2,700-year-old puzzle is that so far no head has been found. He believes it was burned on the pyre, which he will excavate next summer.

He points to suggestions in the Iliad that Achilles, after killing Hector in battle, burned the head of the Trojan hero on Patroclus' pyre.

On one point Stambolidis is categorical: "the executed

man... was an offering at the pyre along with an ox, some sheep, perfume jars and fruit."

The slush knows the wind blew from the south on the day of the execution because of how the bones have been singed. He knows it was August or September because laboratory tests show the grapes burst among the offerings were fresh.

But he cannot say whether the executed man was a criminal, a prisoner of war or an innocent victim like Achilles' Trojans, slaughtered to appease the "murdering fury" of someone still living.

"I believe he was a prisoner of war who killed the person cremated on the pyre but we'll never know for sure," he said.

Uncertainty and controversy surround the early history of the Greek world in the eastern Mediterranean. Disputes are also fierce over Homer and the Odyssey.

Scholars debate which parts of Homer describe practices of the Mycenaean Greeks who dominated the 13th-century-BC Aegean, which parts describe later events, or customs from Homer's own era, and which may have been invented simply to entertain.

Stambolidis said his find proves the story in the 23rd book of the Iliad, of a revenge execution as an offering at a pyre, was a real practice among some ancient Greeks.

"We now know this ritual killing, this ritual vengeance, was happening, at least on Crete, about the time Homer composed his poems," Stambolidis said.

Dutch going for goals against humble Malta

VALLETTA (R) — The Netherlands, led by Rudd Gullit and Marco Van Basten, have much to avenge when they play Malta in a European Soccer Championship qualifier Wednesday.

It was the humble Maltese who stopped the mighty Dutch, competition winners in 1988, from reaching the 1984 finals.

Then, with group rivals Spain needing to score 11 goals against Malta in the final qualifying match, the Dutch looked sure of going through — until Spain romped home 12-1.

This time round, the Dutch are determined to put away as many as possible in the Group Six match at the Ta'qali Stadium.

But they have not been scoring well so far.

The Dutch lost their first match away against Portugal 1-0 but then recovered with an easy 2-0 victory over Greece in Rotterdam last month, even without captain Gullit.

Dutch coach Rinus Michels had two late worries for the Malta tie when midfielders Gerald Vanenburg of PSV Eindhoven and Richard Witschge of Ajax Amsterdam pulled out unfit.

On Sunday Michels replaced Witschge by Erwin Koeman from PSV and Vanenburg by

Hans Gilhaus.

Gilhaus, who plays for Scottish Premier division side Aberdeen was in the squad against Greece but had been left out for Malta in favour of Gullit.

Malta's record in the championships so far has been unimpressive. A 4-0 away defeat to Greece and a 1-1 draw at home, against Finland have left them bottom of the group.

German coach Horst Heese is relying on close marking to smother the talents of the Dutch. "The less space we can give them the better," he said.

He is also leaving out veteran midfielder John Buttigieg, a skilful but erratic player whose mistake against Finland last month helped the Finns equalise.

"He has been foolish and not obeyed my instructions," Heese said of Buttigieg.

Italy drops Viali

Italy dropped striker Gianluca Viali in favour of his Sampdoria team mate Attilio Lombardo in the squad to face Cyprus in the European Championship qualifier Saturday.

Viali, who missed most of the World Cup through injury, is still struggling to regain match fitness and has been overshadowed of late by Lombardo, who scored a blistering goal for Sampdoria in their 1-1 draw

against Bari Sudany.

Viali, who fractured his right foot in December 1989 and had an operation on his left knee this year, returned to league soccer in November but he did not play Sunday.

Lombardo is likely to combine with Juventus strikers Roberto Baggio and World Cup top scorer Salvatore Schillaci.

Regular midfielders Fernando de Napoli, Roberto Donadoni and Giuseppe Giannini are also unfit and were not named.

AC Milan defender Alessandro Costacurta, midfielders Stefano Errano (Genoa) and Diego Fuser (Fiorentina) joined the uncapped Lombardo as the other newcomers in Vicini's squad.

Italy are fourth in the group with two points from two games behind Hungary on four points and the Soviet Union and Norway on three. Cyprus are last with no points.

Spain plus triple strike-force.

Spain will be out for a handful of goals when they take on Albania in the European championship Group One qualifying match Wednesday.

The Spaniards are expected to start the game with three strikers — Emilio Butragueno, Carlos Munoz and Manolo Sanchez.

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Jordan to compete in World Karate Championships in Dubai

DUBAI (Agencies) — Jordan will be one of more than 40 countries competing in the UAE when the 1990 World Karate Championships are hosted in Dubai from Dec. 19-21.

Among the other countries to be represented are Japan, the United States, the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, England, Brazil and Korea. Others will come from as far afield as Argentina and New Caledonia, while the host country, the UAE will also field a strong team.

Making up the Jordanian delegation will be Osama Amarin, Fayez Anis, Mutassam Kh-Husayn, Adnan Abu Baker, Mohammad Eltian, Walid Assaad and Khaled Al-Saffar.

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Rising natural disasters worry insurance industry

ZURICH (R) — A Swiss insurance company has said changes in the world environment will probably increase the risk of natural catastrophes in coming months.

"The rising number of storms and floods and the increased damage they cause must be taken as the first indication of this development," Swiss Reinsurance Co. said in a study.

Figures in its report, "Natural Catastrophes and Heavy Damage Events," showed at least 1.6 million deaths and damage valued at \$83.3 billion in 3,111 events between 1970 and 1989.

This year the insurance industry faced claims for insured damage worth at least \$10 billion after winter storms.

Several factors seemed to support the view that the greenhouse effect seemed to support the view that the greenhouse effect — the warming of the world's climate through industrial pollution — was causing natural catastrophes to happen more often, the report added.

"It is relatively certain, for example, that because of the

warming of the earth's atmosphere, the hurricanes which start in Central America are being pushed more and more to the north."

While much was still uncertain, for example, that because of the warming of the earth's atmosphere, the hurricanes which start in Central America are being pushed more and more to the north."

While much was still uncertain in the climate debate, the greenhouse effect seemed likely to have important consequences for the earth and the insurance industry in the next decades, Swiss Reinsurance said.

The report also noted that man-made catastrophes were on the increase.

Until 1987, billion-dollar insurance claims usually stemmed from natural catastrophes, but over the last two years more claims from man-made disasters reached this level.

These included several offshore oil platform accidents and the pollution off Alaska from the grounded tanker Exxon Valdez in 1989, the report said.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday

	One Sterling	1.9310/20	U.S. dollar	Canadian dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1570/80		1.4870/80	Deutschmarks
	1.6775/85		1.2750/60	Dutch guilders
	30.72/77		5.0575/025	Swiss francs
	5.124/125		5.8400/50	Belgian francs
	133.00/10		5.7460/7510	French francs
	5.6050/6100		5.7460/7510	Italian lire
	5.8400/50		5.7460/7510	Japanese yen
	5.7460/7510		5.7460/7510	Norwegian crowns
One ounce of gold	375.90/376.40		5.7460/7510	Danish crowns
			5.7460/7510	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Stocks closed higher after a day of thin trading, propped up mainly by index-linked buying. Expectations of lower interest rates lent support. The Nikkei Index closed up 336.11 points, or 1.40 per cent, at 24,424.02 after losing 261.59 points Monday.

SYDNEY — Concern about the economy and chances of a Gulf war hit the market badly. The All-Ordinaries Index closed 12.1 points lower at 1,283.6, its lowest level since March 1, 1988, when it ended at 1,273.3 points.

HONG KONG — Stocks recovered from early losses to end higher in quiet trading on overseas buying with very little local activity. The blue-chip Hang Seng Index rose 14.73 points to end at 3,066.65.

SINGAPORE — Share prices ended slightly higher in thin trading on late bargain hunting after early weakness and sharp falls Monday. The Straits Times Industrial index recovered 2.82 points to end at 1,174.40. It lost 16.75 points on Monday.

BOMBAY — Prices fell after the government raised excise and import duties to mop up fresh revenue. The Bombay Stock Exchange Index closed 76.81 points to 1,111.73. The National Index lost 31.48 to 556.19.

FRANKFURT — Prices ended little changed. "The market is in a bad way when it barely manages to rise all after a three per cent drop," said Klaus Stabel, trader at Berenberg bank. The Dax index ended 1.54 points higher at 1,477.41.

LONDON — Shares closed slight firmer in moderate late trading following a stronger trend on Wall Street. Dealers said the market remained relatively quiet ahead of the Christmas holiday. The FTSE 100 ended up 3.9 points at 2,161.8.

NEW YORK — Blue chips tacked on additional gains at midday, but held off the day's best levels. Trading was confined to a narrow range. Investors were hopeful of a further cut in interest rates, perhaps as early as Wednesday. At 1721 GMT the Dow Jones industrial average was up 15.10 at 2,608.42.

Banana syndrome overtakes U.S. economic policymakers

WASHINGTON (R) — The banana syndrome appears to be overtaking American officials as they grope for ways to describe economic prospects but find that uttering the word "recession" leaves a bad taste in their mouths.

Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady sidestepped interviewers' efforts during the weekend to persuade him to say the weakened American economy was in recession.

"It's quite clear — there's no point being unrealistic — that we're going to have a significant

economic slowdown in the fourth quarter of this year," Brady said on television.

Alan Greenspan, who as chairman of the Federal Reserve central bank has key responsibility for the economy, said recently that "a meaningful downturn" was in progress.

It would be hard to find a private economist who does not think a recession is at least beginning, but policymakers want to avoid making things worse by depressing consumers.

In 1978 Alfred Kahn, then chairman of president Jimmy

Carter's Council on Wage and Price Stability, bluntly said that unless inflation was brought under control the nation might face a deep depression.

Kahn was promptly asked by the White House to stop using that particular word. So he began substituting the word "banana," saying that the United States risked going into a banana and recalling the great banana of 1929.

A recession is generally defined as consecutive business quarters of shrinking production of goods and services.

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, presenting the budget bill to parliament on Dec. 9, said the economy had turned around last year after years of decline during the 1980-88 war with Iraq.

He said the government's more market-oriented policies were paying off and in many areas the economy was ahead of targets set down in a five-year plan which envisages an 8.1 per cent annual growth in the gross domestic product to 1994.

"We have a period of serious austerity ahead of us," Ettelaat newspaper quoted Rafsanjani as saying about the task of putting the economy on a peace footing.

"The deficit worsened by 24.5 per cent from September's revised \$9.33 billion, which was previously reported as \$9.41 billion.

Despite a lower volume of imported oil, the total cost of the imports climbed to \$7.2 billion at the official exchange rate of 64 riyals per dollar — an increase of 43 per cent over the current year, Zanjani said.

The general budget is composed of two parts. More than 10

percent of the budget is set at 18.79 trillion riyals — equivalent to \$293.55 billion at the official exchange rate of 64 riyals per dollar — an increase of 43 per cent over the current year, Zanjani said.

The October trade deficit was the biggest monthly gap since February 1989.

Meanwhile, U.S. consumer prices rose 0.3 per cent in November, half the rate in October, reflecting a slowdown in oil price increases, the Labour Department said.

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Moldova walks out of parliament; Uzbek leader attacks Gorbachev

MOSCOW (R) — Delegates from Moldova walked out of the Soviet parliament Tuesday, angered that Moscow was ignoring their call for a crackdown on the southwestern republic's breakaway ethnic minorities.

Deputies said the walkout was sparked by the presence at the Congress of People's Deputies of invited observers from Moldova's two breakaway districts, the self-proclaimed Turkic Gagauz and the Russian Dniestr republics.

Opposition to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's proposed new union treaty, binding ethnic republics to Moscow, has been building among Moldova's Romanian-speaking majority.

"We are leaving for good," Moldovan deputy Dumitru Matkovsky told reporters after leaving the hall. "We don't agree with the position of the centre."

Matkovsky said Moscow's indifference to the battle with the rebel districts had doomed Moldova's participation in any new treaty.

"We are not being allowed to sort out our sovereignty by ourselves. We won't sign the union treaty. There is no chance of that now," he said.

The three Baltic republics — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — and the Transcaucasian republic of Georgia have all said they

would not sign a new treaty under any circumstances.

Russia, the Ukraine and others have demanded further enhancement of the republics' rights under any new accord with the Kremlin.

But the Moldovan walkout dramatically underscored the ethnic headaches plaguing Gorbachev as he tries to patch up the crumbling union and raise the explosive issue of who is empowered to sign such an agreement.

Hardliners have demanded that the Russian minorities in many republics be allowed to bypass local objections and sign a new agreement with Moscow. The elected leadership of the republics, however, insist that only they can approve such an agreement.

At the weekend up to 300,000 people rallied in the Moldovan capital, Kishiniov, to denounce the draft treaty and to demand a boycott of the congress by local deputies.

The walkout leaves two glaring gaps in the sea of red-upholstered delegates' chairs in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. Lithuania, which has suspended a formal independence declaration, sent no representatives at all.

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan's president on Tuesday joined cri-

tics challenging Mikhail Gorbachev's blueprint to save the Soviet Union from collapse, raising the threat of a powerful Central Asian coalition to torpedo the plan.

Islam Karimov, the Uzbek Communist Party boss, told the Soviet parliament a series of decisions the Kremlin had gravely damaged the constituent republics.

He criticised Gorbachev's proposed new treaty binding the 15 republics and the centre as reserving too much power for Moscow, adding Uzbekistan's support required major structural changes.

"The centre should not limit the rights of the republics but it should be the other way around," Karimov said in the second day of debate on Gorbachev's state of the union address. "We support Kazakhstan on this point."

Karimov's remarks followed a powerful barrage Monday from Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, a rising star on the national scene, who said the flood of local sovereignty declarations was an expression of "self-preservation."

Delegates from Estonia, meanwhile, rejected Gorbachev's plan, for a referendum on his proposed union treaty. The republic's president, Arnold Rantel, instead called for a bi-

lateral accord recognising Estonia's right to independence.

Karimov said a Kremlin decision to raise meat prices had forced his republic to find two billion rubles (\$3.63 billion) and he denounced the "poisoning" of his land and people to fulfill inflated government demands for cotton production.

"Cotton, once our pride, has become our tragedy," Karimov said.

The joint assault reveals a deep crack in the once solid pro-Gorbachev bloc in Central Asia, and threatens to stifle the draft treaty altogether.

Karimov's attack came amid rising frustration from deputies over their inability to shore up their own authority and overcome the country's political and economic slide.

"The whole country is in anarchy," said collective farm Director Alexander Dolgapov. "Look how much we have talked, look how many decisions we've taken."

"But everything we've done has stayed in the air. Things are getting worse and worse. It's not surprising 60,000 people a year kill themselves in the Soviet Union," he told the session.

"A lot is said about perestroika but it has done virtually nothing for the country. We are not on the way to Stalinism or socialism but catastrophe."



Indian premier vows use of force to end civil strife

NEW DELHI (AP) — As independent India's most frenzied religious riots ravage the nation and its economy, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar warned he is prepared to use unlimited "coercive power" to end the fighting.

"Any amount of force that is needed will be used in order to stop this situation," he said Monday in a 15-minute Associated Press interview at his New Delhi residence. "There's no limit."

At least 300 people have been killed in fighting between India's Hindu majority and Muslim minority in the past 10 days. Another 300 people were killed in rioting in October and November.

The ferocity of the violence has little parallel since the rioting when the British-ruled sub-continent was divided into predominantly-Hindu India and predominantly-Muslim Pakistan in 1947.

The current bout of rioting has erupted in several cities. Mobs have axed infants to death, burned people and lynched passengers in trains. In many cities, security forces have prevented large-scale killings by opening fire to disperse rival mobs.

Chandra Shekhar, who took office on Nov. 10 after the religious upheaval was instrumental in the removal of his predecessor V.P. Singh, said his government was willing to hold a dialogue with anyone "who is an Indian and is willing to ... settle issues within the framework of the constitution."

That means his government is not willing to negotiate on demands for independence, but will consider any other political concessions.

But, he admitted there had been little response from Sikh militant groups in Punjab or Muslim militias in the Kashmir Valley.

"Unless and until there is a positive response publicly, there is no use," he said. "Let us see how far we can go and how they are ready to adjust."

But, he said, both Hindus and

Muslims had among them "certain vested interests who want to keep this problem going."

"Let us hope that good sense

Bangladesh forms commission to probe corruption

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's caretaker government appointed a commission Tuesday to investigate alleged corruption by former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad and members of his administration, state radio reported.

Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmad named Supreme Court Judge D.M. Ansaruddin to head the three-man inquiry commission.

State radio said the other members are Abdul Hannan, a member of the National Board of Revenue and Mahbubul Huq, a police commissioner. The radio gave no further details.

The commission will also look into allegations of misuse of power by Ershad, his ministers and government employees, the Bangladesh News Agency (BNS) said.

Opposition and student leaders are demanding a quick trial for Ershad, who resigned on Dec. 4 after weeks of violent protests against his eight-year rule.

They accuse Ershad, 60, who seized power in a coup in 1982, of crimes ranging from gold smuggling to stealing foreign aid money.

Ahmad said there is not yet enough evidence to take Ershad to court.

Ershad, who was arrested on Dec. 12, is under house arrest. Former Deputy Prime Minister Shah Moazzem Hossain and Interior Minister Mahmudul Hasan have been detained.

Other officials, including ex-Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mabum, are in hiding.

Ahmad restated his government's commitment to neutrality and promised that general elections in March would be free and fair.

"My administration will remain firm and fully neutral to make the March 2 polls completely neutral, free and fair," he said in a speech Tuesday.

He said his caretaker government was taking steps to ensure a smooth transition to democracy and had told people to surrender illegal arms by Dec. 26 or face penalties of up to life imprisonment.

Chretien's warning followed on the heels of an appeal by Mulroney Sunday for national unity.

"Do we still want to live together as a country? My answer is 'yes,'" Mulroney said.

He argued that it would be senseless for Canada to tear itself apart while other regions — Europe, in particular — forge links to enhance their global position.

Mulroney suggested more power could be transferred from the federal government to the provinces in a "re-confederation" — a renewal of the federal system adopted by Canada in 1867.

But neither he nor Chretien had anything concrete to offer Quebec, which is not the only dissident province but the one closest to seceding.

Polls show that around two-thirds of all Quebecers favour sovereignty-association, and just over half want outright independence.

Chretien warned the commission that a separation would not end Quebec's frustrations.

He said the English Canadian provinces, which would be split geographically, might seek territorial concessions, such as a corridor linking the eastern and western provinces.

"If people are tired of constitutional negotiations, they'll find the negotiations relating to separation extremely complicated," he added.

Quebecers were cowed 10 years ago by the economic threats, and the province agreed to renew power-sharing talks.

COLUMN

S. Korean students, parents suffer through exam day

SEOUL (R) — Over half a million high school students and parents snarled traffic in Seoul and other major cities Tuesday as the annual day of religious agony for college entrance examinations.

Yonhap News Agency said 662,469 students were applying for 146,346 places in 94 universities. Many students spent most of the night outside test centres to avoid being late for an 8:40 a.m. starting time which, if missed, could mean waiting a whole year before trying again.

On the separatist revolts lingering in the northern states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, Chandra Shekhar said he was willing to hold a dialogue with anyone "who is an Indian and is willing to ... settle issues within the framework of the constitution."

That means his government is not willing to negotiate on demands for independence, but will consider any other political concessions.

But, he admitted there had been little response from Sikh militant groups in Punjab or Muslim militias in the Kashmir Valley.

"Unless and until there is a positive response publicly, there is no use," he said. "Let us see how far we can go and how they are ready to adjust."

Sikh radicals in Punjab have killed at least 3,100 people this year in their quest for independence. In Kashmir, at least 1,600 people have died in 1990.

Soviet police nab workers trying to steal aid

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet Red Cross officials tried to steal parcels of humanitarian aid donated from abroad but were foiled by police, a newspaper reported Monday.

It was led by a Swedish businessman, Alvar Lindencrona, whose work for the International Chamber of Commerce made it possible for him to travel inconspicuously to the United States and Britain for briefings with the CIA and MI6, the report said.

The network, supported by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Britain's MI6, existed from 1958 until at least 1978 and included 150 standby resistance leaders and special arms depots spread across Sweden, Dagens Nyheter said.

Its report was the latest in a series of revelations indicating Sweden has closer strategic ties to the West during the cold war than it has acknowledged publicly.

It also had intended to draw on CIA support to evacuate the Swedish cabinet, royal family and defence staff to London where an exile government would lead the resistance.

Dagens Nyheter said it was unclear what happened to the organisation after 1978 when Lindencrona retired. He died three years later.

Asked about the report, Swedish Assistant Under-Secretary of Defence Nils Gyliden said he was unaware of any secret resistance network.

Research supported by foreign documents and participants' accounts have indicated Sweden had secret weapons and intelligence agreements with the United States from the late 1940s through to the 1980s.

Greek director excommunicated

FLORINA, Greece (R) — A Greek Orthodox bishop excommunicated director Theo Angelopoulos as work on his latest film started under heavy police guard in Florina. Bishop Agustinos Kandiotis told some 1,000 people packing Florina's main church the script of the Suspended Step Of The Stork — a \$3.3 million production starring Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni — was unpatriotic and anti-church. Kandiotis, who campaigns against sexual freedom, beauty contests and women smoking, said that because of the script's "down with borders" message, Angelopoulos and his crew were excommunicated for four years. He threatened "fighting will strike" unless they leave the town near the Yugoslav border.

Arsenio Hall argues with gays

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Talk-show host Arsenio Hall argued at the beginning of his program with two homosexual activists who demanded to know why he doesn't interview more homosexual guests. The nearly 10-minute debate, which at times turned into a shouting match, appeared to run uncontested on the show. It was taped early in the evening for broadcast later that night. It started when two men, one wearing a T-shirt carrying the slogan "queer nation," stood up in the audience and questioned why Hall didn't have more homosexual guests on the programme.

All classes in medical and dental colleges except first-year classes will resume. Classes will resume on Jan. 15, the official Working People's Daily reported. It did not say why the first-year classes were not resumed.

The military government began reopening schools in April 1989, starting with primary schools. High schools and some vocational institutions also reopened last year, but university gates remain locked.

Burmese general calls opposition's rival government plan a mistake

BANGKOK (AP) — A powerful member of Burma's military government has warned opposition politicians they would be making a "great mistake" by going along with plans to declare a rival government along with rebel groups, the Bangkok Post reported Tuesday.

Up to dozen members of Burma's main opposition group, the National League for Democracy, were expected to announce the formation of a provisional government Tuesday at the headquarters of an ethnic group waging an armed revolt against the Rangoon administration.

But neither he nor Chretien had anything concrete to offer Quebec, which is not the only dissident province but the one closest to seceding.

Polls show that around two-thirds of all Quebecers favour sovereignty-association, and just over half want outright independence.

Chretien warned the commission that a separation would not end Quebec's frustrations.

He said the English Canadian provinces, which would be split geographically, might seek territorial concessions, such as a corridor linking the eastern and western provinces.

"If people are tired of constitutional negotiations, they'll find the negotiations relating to separation extremely complicated," he added.

Quebecers were cowed 10 years ago by the economic threats, and the province agreed to renew power-sharing talks.

Khin Nyunt answered questions submitted in writing by the Bangkok Post newspaper.

Last week, Khin Nyunt announced that the military junta had arrested 18 members of the League in recent days for planning to establish a shadow government.

In the newspaper interview, Khin Nyunt repeated his government's position that it would transfer power only when a new constitution had been drafted. Western diplomats have said that process could take years.

Reminding readers that the existing government is recognised by the United Nations, he said, "we firmly believe that no nation will be in a position to welcome the government in exile."

The dissidents all fled the threat of arrest in Burma since winning parliamentary seats in the May 27 national election. The League won the election by a landslide, taking 392 of the 485 contested seats, but the military has refused to allow the opposition to take power.

"It would be a great mistake if the political party which won in the elections and other political parties committed themselves by forming a jungle-based government in collaboration with the outlawed insurgents who are regarded by both the government and the people of (Burma) as illegal elements," Maj.-Gen. Khin Nyunt, Burma's chief of military intelligence, was quoted as saying.

The provisional government declaration was expected to be backed by members of the Democratic Alliance of Burma,

an umbrella organisation for the 21 ethnic and other rebel groups fighting the central government.

The current military government in Rangoon took power by force in 1988. Soldiers killed thousands of people who took part in a nationwide movement for democracy that year.

The government has since arrested most leading members of the opposition. These include Aung San Suu Kyi, the head of the National League for Democracy.

Meanwhile medical and dental colleges, closed during a nationwide pro-democracy uprising two years ago, are to reopen early next year, the state press reported Tuesday.

Western diplomats have also said it is unlikely any nation would recognise a parallel government.

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The military government began reopening schools in April 1989, starting with primary schools. High schools and some vocational institutions also reopened last year, but university gates remain locked.

The military government urged him to relax.